

THE PUBLIC RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE

This section describes Tennessee's infrastructure of state and federal agencies managing recreation resources, recreation grants and technical assistance programs, and professional training programs for parks and recreation managers.

AGENCIES MANAGING RECREATION RESOURCES

Federal:

National Park Service (NPS)

US Forest Service (USFS)

US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

US Army Corps of Engineers (COE)

State:

Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC)

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA)

Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry (TDA)

Tennessee Department of Tourist Development (TDOTD)

Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD)

Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT)

RECREATION GRANT PROGRAMS and TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

One of the most important reasons for updating the State Recreation Plan is to help set priorities for two recreation grant programs administered by the Department of Environment and Conservation: the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Local Parks and Recreation Fund. This chapter discusses these two programs, along with other funding sources for recreation lands and activities.

Obtaining funds is only one part of providing recreation; management of these resources is crucial to the user's enjoyment. Technical assistance is provided by a number of public agencies to assist with a variety of recreation related issues. The resources described in this chapter represent the key public fiscal and managerial commitments to recreation in Tennessee. The information cited was obtained directly from the management agencies.

Grant Programs

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund -- LWCF -- is the premier federal grant program for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation lands. This program is funded by an annual Congressional appropriation, part of which goes to fund the National Park Service and other federal land managing agencies. The remaining portion is reserved for each state to distribute for state or local outdoor recreation areas. The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) maintains this responsibility in Tennessee; a portion of the LWCF money is reserved for Tennessee State Parks and the remainder is made available to Tennessee communities.

Since 1965, when this program came into being under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, over \$63.8 million has been allocated to Tennessee, helping to purchase 53,377 acres of land.

These grants require a 50% match from the communities or the state. Communities compete for the limited money through a grant application, guided by an "Open Project Selection Process" that attempts to provide both grant applicants and administrators a fair and equitable evaluation system. Once the funds are committed for land acquisition or facility development, the property must remain forever as public recreation lands.

The LWCF program is currently under review and will probably undergo changes within the 1995-2000 time frame. The precipitous drop in funding throughout the 1980's challenged the reliance developed on this income. The Tennessee General Assembly responded with the passage of the 1991 Partnership Act (TCA 69-4-409), which established the Local Parks and Recreation Fund.

Local Parks and Recreation Fund (LPRF)

The Local Parks and Recreation Fund is derived from a portion of the 4¢ increase in the Real Estate Transfer Tax enacted by the **1991 Partnership Act**. Each time real property is sold, 1.75¢ per \$100 is deposited into this recreation fund.

Other programs that receive money from this increase are the **State Lands Acquisition Fund** and the **Agricultural Non-Point Water Pollution Control Fund**, both of which obtain 1.5¢ per

\$100. LPRF funds are administered in a similar manner to the LWCF funds: a competitive grant requiring a 50% match by the local community for acquisition and development of outdoor or indoor recreation facilities, including trails, that must remain forever as public lands. An “Open Project Selection Process” developed by TDEC Recreation Services Division is utilized by both programs to determine the awards.

In Fiscal Years 1993-2003, LPRF distributed over \$29 million in grants, though this number is well below the amount of funds requested.

Cooperative Conservation Initiative

Under the Bush administration, a significant portion of the LWCF funds have been reassigned to the Cooperative Conservation Initiative. This is a federal program that consolidates all the challenge cost-share programs of the National Park Service (NPS), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) which support the restoration, protection and enhancement of natural areas on public and private lands. The Department of Interior distributes half of the initiative's money on a competitive basis through the Land and Water Conservation Fund's state assistance program, while the other half is distributed competitively by NPS (\$22 million), FWS (\$18 million) and BLM (\$10 million).

The Cooperative Conservation Initiative includes the following programs:

- **Forest Legacy Program**, which provides federal funding for up to 75 percent of the cost of conservation easements or fee acquisition of forest lands threatened with conversion to non-forest uses. Twenty-four states, including Tennessee, currently qualify for Forest Legacy funds.
- **Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund**, which provides funds for animal, plant, and habitat surveys; research; planning; monitoring; habitat protection, restoration, management, and acquisition; and public education.
- **North American Wetlands Conservation Fund**, which provides funds for acquisition of lands or waters for long-term conservation and for restoration of wetland ecosystems and habitat for migratory birds and other fish and wildlife species.
- **Private Stewardship Grants**, which provides grants and other assistance on a competitive basis to individuals and groups engaged in local, private, and voluntary conservation efforts that benefit federally listed, proposed, or candidate species, or other at-risk species.
- **Landowner Incentive Program**, which provides grants to establish or supplement landowner incentive programs that protect and restore habitats on private lands, to benefit Federally listed, proposed or candidate species or other species determined to be at-risk, and provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners for habitat protection and restoration.
- **Forest Stewardship Program**, which provides technical assistance to landowners relating to trees, other plants and flowers, the wildlife, the soil, the water, and the aesthetic value, habitat projects, timber sales, and tree planting.

Tennessee Recreation Trail Grant Program

Used Towards: Motorized, non-motorized and multi-use trail construction and trail education.
 Type of Grant: Available to local governments, state agencies and non-profit organizations.
 20% match required.

Administered By: Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Recreation Services Division
 Funding Source: Federal appropriation (National Recreation Trails Fund Act)

In Fiscal Years 1993-2003 Tennessee received over \$5.8 million for RTP projects, administration and education.

Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program is a community resource of the National Park Service. Rivers & Trails staff work with community groups and local and State governments to conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways.

Rivers & Trails works in urban, rural, and suburban communities with the goal of helping communities achieve on-the-ground conservation successes for their projects. The focus is on helping communities help themselves by providing expertise and experience from around the nation. From urban promenades to trails along abandoned railroad rights-of-way to wildlife corridors, the assistance in greenway efforts is wide ranging. Similarly, the assistance in river conservation spans downtown riverfronts to regional water trails to stream restoration.

Rivers & Trails has a full-time conservation professional assigned to Tennessee.

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (TEA2000)/ Transportation Enhancement Activities

Used Towards: 10 eligible activities, including provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, historic preservation and scenic highway programs.

Type of Grant: Available to local governments and state agencies. Requires a 20% match in funds.

Administered By: Tennessee Department of Transportation
 Funding Source: Federal appropriation

In Fiscal Years 1995-2002, this program awarded \$88,371,215 in enhancement grants to local governments in Tennessee.

Grants to Artists and Arts Organizations

Used Towards: Ten different project areas: Arts Builds Communities, Arts in Education, Arts Projects, Community Orchestra Challenge Grants, Dance Presenters, General Operational Support, Individual Artists Fellowships, Special Opportunities, Technical Assistance and Touring Arts.

Type of Grant: Available to individual artists or non-profit organizations. Requires a 50% match in funds.

Administered By: Tennessee Arts Commission
 Funding Source: State appropriation and The National Endowment for the Arts

In FY 94-95, the state appropriated \$2,190,110 and the National Endowment for the Arts provided \$700,000, for a total of \$2,890,000.

Tree Planting Grants

Used Towards: Trees planted on public lands by private small business contractors.

Type of Grant: Available to local governments or non-profit organizations. Requires a 25% match in funds.

Administered By: Division of Forestry, Tennessee Department of Agriculture

Funding Source: Federal appropriation by the Small Business Administration

Urban Forestry Grants

Used Towards: Variety of projects related to trees in the urban environment.

Type of Grant: Available to local governments, educational institutions and non-profit organizations. Requires a 50% match in funds.

Administered By: Division of Forestry, Tennessee Department of Agriculture

Funding Source: Federal appropriation through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service.

Forest Stewardship Incentives Program

Used Towards: Multiple resource forest stewardship, including recreation infrastructure (e.g. trails) on private lands.

Type of Grant: Available to private landowners that are certified as a Forest Stewardship participant (see Technical Assistance section). Cost sharing of up to 50%.

Administered By: Division of Forestry, Tennessee Department of Agriculture

Funding Source: Federal appropriation through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service

Disability Demonstration Grants Program

Used Towards: Variety of projects related to providing services to people with disabilities.

Type of Grant: Available to local governments, educational institutions and non-profit organizations. Requires a 25% match in funds.

Administered By: Developmental Disabilities Council, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation

Funding Source: Federal appropriation through the Developmental Disabilities Act.

Other Grant Programs

There are a multitude of other grant programs, from both federal agencies and private foundations. An effort by TDEC's Parks and Recreation Technical Advisory Service (PARTAS) in this planning period is underway to publish a **comprehensive listing** of these sources.

Resource managers at all levels of government continue to search for ways to maintain and expand services under shrinking budgets. These grants are just one element in the funding picture. For example, the 1993 - 1994 Tennessee Budget, Salary and Fringe Benefit Study, undertaken by Middle Tennessee State University for PARTAS, shows that state and federal grants, on average, make up only 14% of the revenue sources for cities and counties of all sizes across the state (see Figure 2-5).

Significant financial commitments are made by local governments, though the need is still great and budgets are continually being squeezed. The use of revenue generating facilities, affordable user fees, volunteer and prison labor are resources that have been used successfully by recreation agencies in Tennessee. Specific funding objectives are listed in Chapter V.

Technical Assistance Programs

Effective management is crucial to the maximum utilization of the limited resources available for recreation. Larger cities, state and federal governments have the capabilities to employ trained professionals, however for many communities this expertise is beyond their budgets. A variety of state and federal agencies in Tennessee aid these communities with technical assistance by having people who are authorities in their field provide free or minimal cost services.

Parks and Recreation Technical Advisory Service

The primary source for assistance on parks and recreation related issues and grants is the Parks and Recreation Technical Advisory Service (PARTAS). PARTAS was created within the Department of Conservation (now the Department of Environment and Conservation) in 1978 by TCA 11-9-108 to increase statewide awareness of the scope of recreation and leisure. The primary purpose of PARTAS is to enhance the quality, diversity, and availability of recreation opportunities in Tennessee with an emphasis on services provided by local governments. The goals of PARTAS are:

- to increase the opportunity for and enhance the quality and diversity of recreation delivery systems in Tennessee, with an emphasis on local government responsibilities,
- to promote recreation professional standards,
- to serve as the inter-agency coordinator for local, state and federal agencies providing parks and recreation assistance,
- to provide assistance by telephone, correspondence, on-site visits, training, research, and publications in the areas of: organization and administration, revenue development, planning, facility and trail development, program planning/evaluation, and employee services.

PARTAS provides services ranging from helping communities organize recreation departments and hire professional recreation directors to conducting recreation assessments and providing grant programs. PARTAS also coordinates with various related agencies for the provision of workshops and training opportunities on issues and subjects relating to parks and recreation. PARTAS serves as the focal point of a “network” of state and local agencies providing technical assistance in parks and recreation.

Other Technical Assistance Programs

There are other public agencies in Tennessee that provide technical assistance on a variety of recreation related issues. The following is a list of these technical assistance programs:

Local Planning Offices

Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development

Recreation Related Services: City and County comprehensive and strategic planning; grant writing

Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS)

University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service

Recreation Related Services: Municipal management

County Technical Advisory Service (CTAS)

University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service

Recreation Related Services: County management

Community Development Program

Tennessee Department of Tourist Development

Recreation Related Services: 18 month program to research and promote tourism

Tennessee Development Districts

Regional Planning and Economic Development organizations established by state legislation
Recreation Related Services: Grant writing, community development projects

Tennessee Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Health

Tennessee Department of Health

Recreation Related Services: Coordinates a variety of programs that promote healthy lifestyles, including:

- Tennessee Sportsfest - an Olympic-style statewide competition
- Tennessee Wellspring Conference - assists with school health programs
- National Employee Health and Fitness Day
- Legislative Wellness Day
- Local Councils on Physical Fitness and Health
- Council Endorsement Program

Gateway Communities

National Park Service

Recreation Related Services: Work with communities that border National Parks on issues of land use and development

Forest Stewardship Program

Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Forestry Division

Recreation Related Services: Forest management on private lands

TVA Recreation Planning Assistance

Tennessee Valley Authority

Recreation Related Waterfront development planning

Services: throughout TVA's service area, conceptual site design on TVA land used for recreation purposes, and technical assistance for comprehensive planning efforts for communities using TVA land for public recreation

TDEC

Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation

Recreation Related Services: Historic preservation (Historical Commission); natural resource conservation (Ecological Services Division); archaeology (Archaeology Division); Native American issues (Indian affairs); geology (Geology Division)

Professional Training

A number of two-year colleges, four-year colleges and universities offer courses and degree programs which prepare students for employment in the professional fields of park, recreation and leisure services. These academic programs range from the single introductory course which may be found in a community college to undergraduate degrees from several of the state's universities. Institutions offering preparatory coursework are located in each of the geographic regions of the state. Schools that offer an academic major, minor, or emphasis in parks, recreation, or leisure services are:

- Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City
- David Lipscomb University, Nashville
- Maryville College, Maryville
- Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro
- Tennessee Wesleyan College, Athens
- Union University, Jackson
- University of Memphis
- University of Tennessee, Chattanooga
- University of Tennessee, Knoxville
- University of Tennessee, Martin

Students are an excellent resource for general staffing requirement and work on special projects. The faculty of these institutions, in addition to their teaching responsibilities, are active in research and public service activities.

Funding is a constant issue for recreation development and management -- there is always a need for more money. This chapter has shown some of the efforts being made to provide recreation funds. There are also indirect opportunities to save money through effective management, and there are a number of technical assistance programs available to help recreation providers in Tennessee. The next chapter discusses the existing recreation supply in the state and the goals of the public recreation resource managers.